583 between 500 and 600 marks in the south. Devaluation of the money, which has also taken place in Africa, has considerably raised the price in comparison to what it was formerly.

583 The purchase price cannot be paid in money (spear money) alone, in cattle alone, or in any specific type of goods alone; 436 instead, all the objects of exchange which are in circulation 435 must be represented. Thus, in 1906, for instance, the following things were paid for a woman in the Fang region:

6,000 spears	420. -- marks
12 rifles	120. -- marks
2 vats of powder . . .	4. -- marks
70 choppers	70. -- marks
2 sheep	50. -- marks
2 iron pots	8. -- marks
10 pieces of cloth . . .	40. -- marks
5 hats	10. -- marks
13 kettles of salt @ 2. -- marks	26. -- marks
2 knives	2. -- marks
2 packages of beads . .	2. -- marks
2 tobacco pipes . . .	----. 50 mark
2 packages of flints . .	--. 50 mark
1 hatful of buttons . .	--. 50 mark
	753. 50 marks /261/

Any existing illegitimate children go along with the marriage [848] bargain. In fact, the bridegroom has to pay 500 spears for a boy and 1,000 spears for a girl; incidentally, he is only too glad to do so, because each child means an addition to his wealth.

I shall not go into a discussion of the endless number of quar- 578 rels that arise on the occasion of a marriage, especially when 583 the entire purchase price is not paid at once. Nor shall I speak of the fact that the girl's father likes to steer his daughter, even if she is in love with another, into the hands of the man who can pay the most or the most readily. All this would lead too far afield.

606 If the girl stays in her parents house and if the payment of 583 the purchase price extends over weeks and months, the suitor has 584

583 sufficient time to get to know his future wife and her family.
584 He treats them with the greatest consideration, and for the mother-
606 in-law (nɨe-ngɔ̀n III, that is, the girl's mother) especially he has an enormous amount of respect. He is courtesy itself, bringing her presents, large and small, and from time to time killing a chicken or a sheep for her. In short, one could in all seriousness speak of a mother-in-law cult (see the love feast, Vol. II, p. 24). And above all: oson, oson, oson: shame, shame, and more shame. The son-in-law is unspeakably ashamed before the mother-in-law, and vice versa, she before him. This is especially true after the wedding when the good mother-in-law extends her modesty also to the members of the son-in-law's kin group. Like a thief she steals behind the dwellings into her daughter's house in order not to be seen, and -- who knows? -- perhaps in order not to give rise to mother-in-law jokes.

Riddle:

[539] [524] ŋzɛ̌'n e bɔ̃nʃ̌ɛ̃, e ne kaangǎ
Way of the lizards, it is (in the) reeds (Cyperus)

Solution:

ŋzɛ̌'n e bonɨ̃ɛ́ngɔ̃'n, e n' a
Way of the mother-in-law, it is on (the) stretch

fɑ́
behind the houses.

585 On the day when a man takes his young wife home, the village
535 celebrates with a sizable dance, for which all adorn themselves to
[302] the best of their ability and which the young wife, red from red wood dye, attends as guest of honor seated on a stool. On this occasion, the popping of blunderbusses may not be omitted, because it belongs to the festive music like our flourish of trumpets. The dancing and shooting last several days when a wealthy chief has acquired a new wife or if it is the first wife of a fellow villager. There is nothing strikingly special about any of this; the festivity simply involves a series of different /262/ dances (among which the dschama is particularly popular which are also customary on other occasions.

562 789 her husband. The "son-in-law" and the "mother-in-law" are bound together by a system of interdicts; the mwanõ are required [606] to show respect to the "generation of the mothers"; the pre-eminence attached to seniority plays a role in the relations between the sexes. The woman may therefore be the object of respect and the subject of fear. [151] On the other hand, "associa-562 795 tions" of women which have created a hierarchy, a teaching, a ritual of initiation, and a whole body of distinguishing symbols and signs and a technique shown by a specific dance, are referred to in various documents, particularly the Mévungõ (1), which is

1. Unpublished documents collected by Abbot A. Walker, a native of Lower Gabon and truly versed in local ethnology.

a Pahouin version of the Nyèmbé, a widely disseminated female sect in Gabon. This sect was observed by Du Chaillu about 1860 among the Ba-kélé who were for the most part subdued by the Fang. This observer wrote at that time that the Nyèmbé "protects the women from their male enemies, it avenges their grievances, and serves them in all circumstances according to their whims."(2)

2. Father du Chaillu, op. cit., p. 322 ff.

This points out with great subtlety, to the essentially compensatory role played by such a grouping. By participating in the "society of women," the woman remedies the marginal situation and the submission which are her share throughout her daily life. It imposes or necessitates her collaboration in important moments for the community and in domains which in principle are forbidden to her. [535] Thus the dance of the Mévungõ was used "long ago when a Pahouin tribe was preparing to wage war against another tribe or to make raids for women"; it was also used "at the time of preparation for great elephant hunts." (3) Such "associations" no longer survive

3. Abbot A. Walker, notes inédites [unpublished notes].

595 The first wife, married by mfañ aluk, a proper wedding, and called ôsua minga or ékômba, theoretically has a privileged position vis-à-vis the mimbom or co-wives. It falls to her to aid or replace the [606] mother-in-law, ntyi, in her role of disciplinarian over the women of the nda. It is or was she who took over the training of the young immature brides waiting to reach puberty in her hut; co-wives of inferior rank therefore often looked upon her as their ntyi. This relationship of daughter-in-law and mother-in-law also exists between two mimbom when the nsuba of the second was paid with the nsuba received for the marriage of a daughter of the first, or when she was the object of a marriage by exchange for this daughter.

Against these legal prerogatives, we find the actual prerogatives of the favorite, nkpwek or ntômba (ntômba = ewe), who besides may be the ôsua minga, although this is rather rare. Custom recognizes the actual privileges of the nkpwek by limiting them so as to prevent them from becoming privatives of the rights of the other wives. I think, although I cannot state it for certain, that there exists, besides, a nuance between the terms nkpwek and ntômba, the first referring, as the word indicates, to an actual preference on the part of the husband, the second to a legal position which the most prolific of the wives would have, or perhaps the one of the best origin.

614 Let us remember that marriage does not remove a woman from her own clan to attach her to her husband's: she is connected with this clan only through her children, if she has any. These children and their bobenyañ will become bobekal to their matrilineal cousins.
586 If the marriage breaks up without the woman having borne a child, a kinship relation between the two clans is not established.

Such a dissolution of a marriage may come about, first, upon the death of the woman when no éjian takes place, the substitution of a sister, which is rare today. The kinship tie between the clans is in force if children are born of the marriage; it remained in force in former times in the absence of children if the nsuba was not repaid. The husband's death ends the personal marriage tie but not the collective bond by virtue of which widows are assigned to the heir, as described above. /55/

One of the most frequent causes /sic/ of the dissolution of a marriage nowadays is divorce. This may be the husband's action: a suu minga jañ, he sends his wife back to her village. The grounds usually given are habitual misbehavior, sorcery, "bad character, "